

The Heart of Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries. High blood pressure often has no signs or symptoms. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to be tested for it.

Having your blood pressure tested is quick and easy. It is recorded as two numbers: systolic pressure "over" diastolic pressure. Both numbers in a blood pressure reading are important. As we grow older, systolic blood pressure is especially important.

Categories for Blood Pressure Levels in Adults

(Ages 18 Years and Older)

Blood Pressure Level (mmHg)			
Category	Systolic		Diastolic
Normal	< 120	and	< 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure			
Stage 1 Hypertension	140–159	or	90–99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥ 160	or	≥ 100

Legend - < means LESS THAN
≥ means GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO

When systolic and diastolic blood pressures fall into different categories, the higher category should be used to classify blood pressure level. For example, 160/80 mmHg would be stage 2 hypertension (high blood pressure).

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance naturally produced by the liver in our bodies. It is essential for the production of hormones and Vitamin D and an integral part of cell membranes. The level produced by our bodies is safe in most people.

The Heart of Cholesterol

Here's what your numbers mean.		
Total blood cholesterol		
Desirable:	Less than 200 mg/ dL.	Good for you! Try to keep it below this number.
Borderline:	200-239 mg/ dL.	Be on the alert! You are at risk for a heart attack. You need to make changes in your lifestyle.
High:	240 mg/ dL or higher.	Danger zone! You have a higher risk for a heart attack. Seek help from your doctor to lower your cholesterol level.
HDL-cholesterol	35 mg/ dL or higher.	Being physically active can help raise your HDL.

If the total blood cholesterol number is higher than 200, or if your HDL is lower than 35, your doctor may order blood tests to check your LDL cholesterol level. The test will let you know if you need treatment. Take charge and work with your health provider to lower your risk.

Here's what your number means.	
LDL cholesterol	
Desirable:	Less than 130 mg/ dL
Borderline:	130-159 mg/ dL
High:	160 mg/ dL or more